

President's Awards

FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN 2025



Nomination Summaries

PRESIDENT'S AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN 2025

Tyler Ackland
Digital Technical Specialist
Electrical & Computer Engineering

Tyler Ackland has been a dedicated member of the McMaster community since 2007 and plays a foundational role in delivering high-quality, hands-on engineering education. As a laboratory technician in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Tyler supports hundreds of students each term across multiple high-enrolment courses, ensuring that complex laboratory environments operate reliably, safely, and effectively.

Renowned for his technical expertise and proactive approach, Tyler consistently anticipates issues before they arise, resulting in years of uninterrupted lab delivery despite the scale and complexity of the equipment involved. His commitment was particularly evident during the pandemic, when he personally repaired hundreds of faulty student lab kits to ensure learning could continue without delay. Beyond maintenance, Tyler has designed and built custom lab platforms that support project-based learning, including autonomous vehicle systems and specialized hardware that provide students with real-world engineering experience.

Equally valued for his patience and approachability, Tyler supports students and teaching assistants with clarity and care, helping remove barriers to participation and build confidence in technical environments. Through innovation, dedication, and exceptional service, Tyler has had a lasting impact on student success and has strengthened McMaster's reputation as a leader in experiential engineering education.

Shahad Al-Saqqar
Strategic Community-Engaged Research Manager
Office of Community Engagement

Shahad Al-Saqqar has played a transformative role in advancing McMaster's leadership in principled, ethical, and impactful community-engaged research. Since joining the Office of Community Engagement in 2022, Shahad has strengthened institutional capacity for community-engaged research by developing programs, training hundreds of students, and fostering meaningful partnerships between the university and community organizations.

Shahad's leadership was central to launching McMaster's inaugural Community-Engaged Research Day, which brought together students, faculty, staff, and community partners to share knowledge and build relationships. Building on its success, she secured Social Science and Humanities Research Council funding to expand the initiative into a multi-day conference that elevates community voices and celebrates collaborative research. She also leads the administration and evolution of the President's Awards for Community-Engaged Research, introducing a grassroots award stream to ensure equitable recognition of emerging partnerships.

Recognized nationally for her expertise, Shahad represents McMaster in community-based research networks and contributes to policy discussions on ethical research practice and equitable compensation. Through inclusive leadership, innovation, and deep commitment to community partnership, Shahad has strengthened McMaster's reputation as a trusted, values-driven research institution.

Tamara Antone
Administrative Assistant
Medicine

Tamara Antone is the operational backbone of the Division of Gastroenterology, providing exceptional administrative and patient-centred support within a high-volume clinical environment. Her professionalism, sound judgment, and unwavering reliability ensure that complex workflows run smoothly and that both patients and clinical teams feel supported.

Tamara consistently exceeds expectations through her ability to anticipate needs, manage competing priorities, and resolve issues proactively, particularly during high-pressure periods. Her compassionate approach to patient interactions has generated an exceptional volume of unsolicited praise, with patients frequently expressing gratitude for her persistence, empathy, and care. These interactions leave a lasting positive impression and contribute directly to patient trust and satisfaction.

Beyond patient support, Tamara is a trusted resource for colleagues, stepping in without hesitation to support team members and maintain continuity of care. She has also introduced practical tools that improve efficiency and coordination within the clinic. Through her dedication, kindness, and commitment to excellence, Tamara has made a meaningful impact on both patient experience and the culture of her workplace, exemplifying outstanding service at McMaster.

Colleen Ballagh
Administrative Coordinator
Obstetrics & Gynecology

Colleen Ballagh has become a vital leader within the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, providing stability, insight, and exceptional service in a complex academic and clinical environment. Since joining McMaster in 2019, she has progressed into a key operational role, supporting faculty, staff, learners, and external partners with professionalism and care.

Colleen's leadership was particularly evident during a period of significant departmental transition, when multiple senior roles became vacant simultaneously. She stepped forward to provide continuity, assumed responsibilities beyond her role, and ensured that education, clinical, and administrative functions continued with minimal disruption. Her clear communication and physical presence on campus fostered trust and stability during uncertainty.

Colleen has also advanced inclusive excellence by introducing staff recognition awards grounded in equity-informed design, including blinded review processes to mitigate bias. Her leadership in planning major academic events, including the Southern Ontario Reproductive Biology Conference, has elevated McMaster's reputation for research excellence and student engagement. Through initiative, compassion, and institutional knowledge, Colleen exemplifies outstanding service and leadership.

Chris Beltrano
Associate Chef, Alumni Memorial Hall
Hospitality Services

Chris Beltrano is a respected culinary leader whose work has strengthened both daily operations and long-term workforce development within Hospitality Services. As the lead for Alumni Memorial Hall, one of McMaster's most high-profile venues, Chris oversees complex operations while delivering consistently exceptional service for academic, alumni, and VIP events.

Beyond his core role, Chris has led the redevelopment of the apprenticeship training program, aligning it more closely with Red Seal standards and establishing clearer pathways for skill development and mentorship. He has also created a secondary-school co-op partnership that strengthens recruitment and expands access to skilled trades training. His mentorship of apprentice competitors and support of Culinary Team Canada has contributed to success at regional and international levels.

Chris is known for leaning in moments of complexity and pressure, offering calm leadership and practical solutions. Through innovation, inclusive mentorship, and service excellence, he has enhanced McMaster's reputation as an institution committed to professional development, operational excellence, and community engagement.

Jodi-Anne Buckley
Manager, Co-Curricular & Student Engagement
Faculty of Engineering

Jodi-Anne Buckley has made a profound impact on student success, equity, and belonging within the Faculty of Engineering. Since joining McMaster in 2021, she has advanced through progressively influential roles, consistently delivering innovative, student-centered programming that supports career readiness and engagement.

Jodi has been instrumental in developing EDI-focused recruitment and engagement strategies, contributing to a significant increase in Black student representation within Engineering. She founded the Black Outreach STEM Series, creating culturally relevant programming that has engaged thousands of youth and earned national recognition. Within the Faculty, she has strengthened student leadership, co-developed funding frameworks that support over 50 student groups and launched roadmap resources that guide students through key academic transitions.

Known for her empathy and proactive leadership, Jodi builds strong relationships with students, families, and community partners. Her work has enhanced McMaster's reputation as a leader in inclusive education, outreach, and student engagement, while creating lasting structures that support equity and student success.

Mark Busser
Manager, Experiential Education
Faculty of Social Sciences

Mark Busser has provided visionary leadership in advancing career education and experiential learning for Social Sciences students. Since 2021, he has led undergraduate co-op, career, and experiential initiatives that support approximately 4,000 students, while also mentoring a high-performing team and teaching career-focused courses.

Mark has expanded co-op opportunities by launching five new programs, developed comprehensive online career resources linked to labour market data, and introduced a for-credit career preparation course that allows students to engage more deeply with career planning. His work helps students articulate the value of a Social Sciences education and navigate diverse career pathways with confidence.

Grounded in inclusive leadership, Mark prioritizes accessibility and ensures that financial or structural barriers do not limit student participation. His collaborative approach, innovative use of technology, and commitment to student-centred service have strengthened recruitment, enhanced student outcomes, and reinforced McMaster's reputation as a leader in experiential and career-integrated education.

Carol Carte
Research Compliance Auditor
McMaster Biosafety Office

Carol Carte has had a lasting impact on McMaster's research integrity and safety culture through her exceptional leadership in biosafety compliance. With over two decades of service, Carol conducts approximately 120 audits annually across all faculties, consistently achieving outstanding completion and compliance rates within one of Canada's most complex research environments.

Carol has transformed biosafety auditing from a perceived enforcement function into a collaborative, trusted service. Her respectful, solutions-focused approach encourages researchers to seek guidance proactively, leading to early resolution of issues and reduced institutional risk. External regulators routinely recognize the quality and rigor of McMaster's internal audits, reflecting the strength of Carol's work.

Beyond audits, Carol contributes to policy development through the Presidential Biosafety Advisory Committee and supports institution-wide safety initiatives. Through professionalism, empathy, and practical innovation, Carol has shaped a culture where safety and research excellence reinforce one another, strengthening McMaster's reputation as a leader in responsible research.

Darlene Casemore
CAF Animal Care Technician
Faculty of Health Sciences

Darlene Casemore has provided exceptional service to McMaster's research community for over 20 years as an Animal Care Technician at the Central Animal Facility. Her expertise, judgment, and dedication underpin the success of complex research programs, including internationally recognized work involving aging and germ-free animal models.

Darlene is known for going beyond standard care by learning the specific needs of each research program she supports, allowing her to anticipate challenges and optimize animal welfare. Her attention to detail and creative problem-solving has improved efficiency, reduced errors, and supported ethical research practices. She is also a deeply respected trainer and mentor, supporting trainees from diverse backgrounds with patience, clarity, and high standards.

Researchers consistently credit Darlene's care as essential to their success, collaboration, and global impact. Through compassion, innovation, and unwavering commitment to animal welfare, Darlene has made a profound contribution to McMaster's research excellence and reputation.

Betty Chung
Manager, Strategic Faculty Events and Engagement
Faculty of Health Sciences

Betty Chung has been a cornerstone of the Faculty of Health Sciences for over 25 years, providing exceptional leadership in event planning, donor stewardship, and community engagement. Her work supports some of the Faculty's most significant ceremonies and international events, including white coat ceremonies, convocations, donor engagements, and global academic gatherings.

Betty is widely respected for her attention to detail, personal approach to donor relationships, and ability to deliver events that reflect McMaster's values and reputation for excellence. She played a key role in the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame Gala and the U21 Health Sciences Group Annual Meeting, both of which received outstanding feedback from national and international attendees.

Committed to inclusive excellence, Betty thoughtfully integrates cultural awareness, accessibility, and Indigenous engagement into event planning. Through innovation, generosity, and tireless service, she has enhanced McMaster's reputation locally and globally, leaving a lasting impression on students, faculty, donors, and partners alike.

Alexandra Derus
Communication and Events Coordinator
Surgery

Alexandra Derus has played a defining role in shaping the culture, identity, and shared sense of purpose within the Department of Surgery. As Coordinator of Communications and Events, she has led many of the Department's most significant initiatives over the past four years, translating strategic vision into clear, engaging, and human-centred communications and experiences.

Alexandra was instrumental in developing the Department's Five-Year Report, transforming it into a compelling digital narrative that reflects both achievement and values. Her leadership in branding and advancing CREATE, the Department's strategic and cultural framework, has helped anchor academic, clinical, and administrative priorities around a shared identity. Through inclusive storytelling, thoughtful events, and innovative initiatives such as the Creative Collective, Alexandra has strengthened connection, pride, and belonging across faculty, staff, learners, and families.

Widely trusted for her care, integrity, and foresight, Alexandra consistently anticipates needs and elevates both outcomes and experience. Her work has strengthened alignment, renewed momentum following the pandemic, and positioned the Department of Surgery as innovative, values-driven, and people-centred—enhancing McMaster's reputation through culture as much as accomplishment.

Christine Doolittle
Director, Indigenous Student Services
Student Affairs

Chrissy Doolittle is a deeply respected leader whose work has transformed Indigenous student support and strengthened McMaster's commitment to reconciliation, community, and belonging. As Director of Indigenous Student Services, she has led the creation of holistic, culturally grounded initiatives that support Indigenous students from transition to graduation.

Chrissy's advocacy was central to establishing the ionkhihahonnién:ni bursary, which supports Indigenous students with tuition, housing, food, childcare, and transportation—removing barriers that can otherwise prevent access to post-secondary education. She has also championed the creation of an Indigenous Financial Aid Specialist role and led the renewal of Indigenous cultural programming, community events, and learning opportunities that extend well beyond standard working hours.

Through initiatives such as the Indigenous Graduation Celebration, the Gaqdadəihwahni:ya:s Transition Program, and the Indigenous Marauder identity, Chrissy has helped create spaces where Indigenous students feel seen, supported, and empowered. Her leadership is grounded in care, courage, and accountability, strengthening relationships with Six Nations and enhancing McMaster's reputation as an institution committed to meaningful reconciliation and Indigenous student success.

Susan Graci
Training and Support Specialist, Accounts Payable
Financial Affairs

Susan Graci has provided exceptional service and expertise in Accounts Payable for more than a decade, becoming a trusted resource for staff and faculty across McMaster University. Known for her deep knowledge of non-payroll disbursements, compliance requirements, and Mosaic processes, Susan consistently supports colleagues with clarity, patience, and professionalism.

Susan routinely goes above and beyond to provide one-on-one guidance on complex issues such as international payments, tax requirements, reimbursements, and reporting obligations. Her responsiveness and kindness leave a lasting positive impression, helping colleagues feel confident navigating financial processes while ensuring compliance with institutional and government regulations.

Through her commitment to training, continuous improvement, and transparent communication, Susan has strengthened McMaster's financial stewardship and internal service culture. Her ability to make complex information accessible has improved efficiency and accuracy across the University, reinforcing McMaster's reputation for integrity, accountability, and excellent service.

Charissa Hu
Immigration and Mobility Advisor, Student Success Centre
Student Affairs

Charissa Hu has played a critical role in supporting McMaster's international student community through extraordinary expertise, compassion, and leadership. As the University's most experienced licensed Immigration and Mobility Advisor, Charissa provides high-stakes guidance to thousands of students navigating complex and rapidly changing immigration regulations.

For a significant period, Charissa served as McMaster's sole immigration advisor, supporting more than 6,000 international students while delivering advising sessions, webinars, written resources, and cross-campus consultations. She is widely recognized for pairing technical expertise with a holistic, student-centred approach—ensuring students feel heard, supported, and empowered during stressful and often isolating situations.

Charissa's leadership has also driven institutional innovation, including the creation of a formal "authorized leave" documentation process that protects students' future immigration outcomes and has since been adopted as a best-practice model by peer institutions. Through ethical advising, advocacy, and care, Charissa has enhanced student success while strengthening McMaster's reputation as a trusted, responsible, and globally minded university.

Candy Hui
Senior Associate Registrar, Student Recruitment
Office of the Registrar

Candy Hui has provided exceptional leadership in undergraduate recruitment, shaping McMaster's global engagement strategy through relationship-based, student-centred practice. With over 20 years of service, Candy leads an international recruitment team spanning Canada, China, and the United Arab Emirates, while fostering trust with students, families, counsellors, and partners.

Candy consistently exceeds expectations by advancing long-term partnerships and innovative outreach initiatives. She played a key role in McMaster's successful bid to host the International Association for College Admissions Counselling Conference and championed the Guidance Counsellor Fly-in Program, strengthening confidence in McMaster among those who guide students' post-secondary decisions. Her leadership has also embedded equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility into recruitment strategy through training, rural outreach, and culturally responsive international engagement.

Through personalized guidance, thoughtful communications, and sustained presence in key markets, Candy has enhanced student readiness, belonging, and institutional credibility. Her work continues to elevate McMaster's reputation as a welcoming, values-driven, and globally engaged university.

Nicole Knibb
Senior Educator, Academic & Professional Engagement
McMaster Museum of Art

Nicole Knibb has made a profound and lasting contribution to interdisciplinary education, community engagement, and inclusive pedagogy at McMaster University. Through her leadership at the McMaster Museum of Art and as an Adjunct Assistant Professor, she has connected visual art with health education, professional learning, and social reflection.

Nicole is a long-standing co-creator and steward of The Art of Seeing, a nationally recognized program that enhances observation, empathy, and reflective practice among medical learners, students, and leaders. Her work has expanded the role of the Museum as an academic partner and positioned McMaster as a leader in arts-based, experiential education. During the pandemic, she led successful pivots to virtual and hybrid delivery, expanding access while maintaining program quality.

Grounded in decolonial practice, equity, and mentorship, Nicole's work strengthens learning, research, and community connection. Her sustained innovation and leadership continue to enhance McMaster's reputation for inclusive, human-centred education.

Teresa Lipfert
Senior Financial Analyst
Media Production Services

Teresa Lipfert has played a pivotal role in stabilizing and strengthening Media Production Services through exceptional financial leadership, operational insight, and accountability. Joining Media Production Services during the height of the pandemic, Teresa became a key architect of the unit's recovery and long-term sustainability.

As Senior Financial Analyst, Teresa oversees budgeting, forecasting, analysis, and reconciliation while also leading front-office operations and supervising the customer service team. Her leadership was instrumental in guiding Media Production Services through significant financial risk, supporting disciplined decision-making that led to full debt repayment and the establishment of financial reserves.

Known for transparency, calm problem-solving, and collaborative service, Teresa makes financial information accessible and meaningful to colleagues across roles. Her work has strengthened service quality, sustainability initiatives, and institutional confidence in Media Production Services, reinforcing McMaster's reputation for responsible stewardship and operational excellence.

Gabriela Lopez Espinoza
Human Resources Partner
Faculty of Health Sciences

Gabriela Lopez Espinoza has delivered exceptional leadership and impact through her work supporting human resources strategy and organizational transformation within the Faculty of Health Sciences. Since joining McMaster in 2024, she has played a central role in navigating complex change with a people-centred, equity-focused approach.

Gabriela was instrumental in redesigning the administrative support structure for education programs within Health Research, Evidence, and Impact, guiding teams through consolidation, cross-training, and new leadership models. Her steady presence, strategic counsel, and inclusive change-management practices ensured continuity of service while strengthening team culture and operational resilience.

Through standardization, succession planning, and workload redistribution, Gabriela improved service consistency for students and faculty while reducing administrative burden. Her work exemplifies how operational excellence and inclusive values can advance together, enhancing McMaster's reputation as a student-centred and people-focused institution.

Nicole Martin-Enlund
Academic Department Manager
Indigenous Studies

Nicole Martin-Enlund has played a critical role in building the foundation, culture, and success of the Indigenous Studies Department at McMaster. Nicole first came to McMaster in 2023 as the Manager of the Indigenous Education Council. Soon afterwards, Nicole transitioned to be the Academic Department Manager in the Indigenous Studies Department.

Since joining McMaster, Nicole has led the development of departmental systems, governance, budgeting, and events while supporting the launch and growth of a new Master of Arts program. She has been central to major initiatives including departmental renovations, community-engaged programming, land-based courses, and the implementation of significant funding such as the Mastercard Foundation gift.

Widely trusted for her calm leadership, fiscal responsibility, and relational approach, Nicole fosters welcoming spaces for all students, staff, faculty, and community members. Her work has strengthened community partnerships, elevated Indigenous Studies' profile, and enhanced McMaster's reputation for ethical, engaged, and inclusive leadership.

Gisela Oliveira**Associate Director, Skills Development & International Student Services Student Affairs**

Gisela Oliveira has demonstrated outstanding leadership and sustained impact through more than 25 years of service advancing student success at McMaster University. As Associate Director within the Student Success Centre, she provides strategic leadership across career development, global mobility, and international student success, shaping pathways that connect academic learning with meaningful employment and global engagement.

Gisela consistently exceeds expectations through her ability to build innovative, equity-centred programs while stewarding resources responsibly. She has led major externally funded initiatives, strengthened cross-faculty collaboration, and expanded access to global learning and career opportunities for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. Her leadership has also significantly increased student participation in career services, experiential learning, and international exchange.

Beyond campus, Gisela represents McMaster regionally, nationally, and internationally through senior governance roles and global networks, strengthening workforce development and employability strategies. Through vision, collaboration, and unwavering commitment to students, Gisela has enhanced McMaster's reputation as a leader in integrated student success, global engagement, and community partnership.

Beverley Pindar-Donick
Director of Administration
Psychiatry & Behavioural Neurosciences

Beverley Pindar-Donick's 40-year career at McMaster University exemplifies extraordinary dedication, leadership, and impact. Serving as Director of Administration in multiple departments within the Faculty of Health Sciences, Bev has consistently gone beyond the expectations of her role, shaping institutional culture, advancing equity, and mentoring generations of staff and faculty.

A defining contribution of Bev's career is her leadership in co-developing a nationally recognized Anti-Black Racism and Critical Race Education e-learning course. Conceived and delivered entirely beyond her formal role, the program has been adopted by universities and hospitals across Canada and earned international recognition for excellence in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Bev is widely respected for her integrity, fairness, and ability to navigate complex issues with empathy and professionalism. Her mentorship, advocacy, and commitment to inclusive leadership have had lasting influence across McMaster and Canadian academic medicine. Bev's lifetime of service reflects a profound and enduring contribution to the University and its values.

Phil Poelmans
Director
Media Production Services

Phil Poelmans has left an extraordinary legacy through nearly 30 years of service at McMaster University. As Director of Media Production Services, he led the transformation of the unit from a traditional print operation into a sustainable, award-winning provider of integrated print, digital, web, signage, and multimedia services.

Phil guided the department through multiple periods, including the COVID-19 pandemic, successfully reducing debt while maintaining high service standards and contributing to the University's operating budget. Under his leadership, Media Production Services earned national and international recognition and became a model for university in-plant operations across Canada.

Phil's influence is visible across campus—from accessible signage and sustainable printing initiatives to the MacSites platform that underpins McMaster's web strategy. Known for authenticity, stewardship, and a people-first leadership style, Phil has strengthened McMaster's reputation through innovation, reliability, and a commitment to excellence that will leave a positive and lasting legacy.

Laurie Richardson
Project Coordinator
Obstetrics and Gynecology

Laurie Richardson plays a central role in the success of the FLOURISH research lab, providing exceptional operational, financial, and administrative leadership across complex research initiatives focused on maternal and pregnancy health. Her work supports multidisciplinary teams, national and international collaborations, and high-impact research outputs.

Laurie consistently exceeds expectations by anticipating challenges, developing efficient systems, and taking ownership of complex initiatives well beyond her formal role. A standout example is her independent coordination of a three-day international research meeting involving multiple institutions and countries, executed seamlessly and to widespread acclaim.

Known for her professionalism, reliability, and empathy, Laurie provides outstanding service to faculty, trainees, and partners. Her contributions enable research continuity, strengthen collaborations, and enhance McMaster's reputation as a trusted and well-organized research partner.

Rhonda Selinger
Employee Health and Well-being Specialist
Human Resources Services

Rhonda Selinger exemplifies compassionate leadership and exceptional service in her role supporting employee health, medical leaves, accommodations, and return-to-work processes at McMaster University. Her calm presence, sound judgment, and people-first approach provide reassurance during some of the most challenging moments employees and leaders face.

Rhonda has gone beyond her role by enhancing how embedded HR partners manage medical leaves, contributing to clearer and more consistent and responsive processes. Her work has strengthened consistency, empowered HR teams, and improved the experience for employees navigating complex health matters.

Through empathy, cultural awareness, and professionalism, Rhonda has fostered trust in McMaster's health and well-being program. Her contributions reinforce the University's reputation as a caring, responsible employer committed to dignity, inclusion, and psychological safety.

James Smithson
Academic Department Manager
Physics & Astronomy

James Smithson has played a transformative role in strengthening the Department of Physics & Astronomy through strategic leadership, data-driven innovation, and inclusive practice. As Academic Department Manager, he oversees finances, academic administration, and staff leadership while working closely with faculty to advance teaching, research, and outreach.

James consistently exceeds expectations by questioning entrenched processes and implementing improvements that enhance efficiency and reduce administrative burden. His development of faculty dashboards and data-informed tools has improved decision-making, transparency, and service quality across the department and beyond.

A trained Employment Equity Facilitator, James embeds fairness and inclusion into hiring and decision-making processes. Known for generosity and mentorship, he shares innovations across the Faculty of Science and models a culture of collaboration. His work has strengthened departmental effectiveness and contributed to institutional improvement across McMaster.

Michelle Turnbull
Manager, Client Services
University Technology Services

Michelle Turnbull has delivered exceptional leadership in central information technology service delivery, shaping how students, faculty, and staff experience technology at McMaster University. Leading one of the University's largest front-line technical support teams, she ensures reliable, professional support for thousands of users each year.

Michelle exceeds expectations through her commitment to continuous improvement, inclusive service design, and staff development. She has led the evolution of enterprise customer support tools, strengthened knowledge management practices, and guided institution-wide change management through the Change Advisory Board, preventing outages and reducing disruption.

A champion of accessibility and student voice, Michelle supports initiatives such as preferred name implementation and student advisory engagement. Her leadership has strengthened trust in McMaster's digital infrastructure and reinforced the University's reputation as a reliable, modern, and well-managed institution.

Casey Van Dijk
Project Manager, Design & Construction
Facility Services

Casey Van Dijk has made a significant impact on McMaster's built environment through more than a decade of leadership on major capital projects. His portfolio includes landmark facilities such as the Peter George Centre for Living and Learning and Lincoln Alexander Hall, as well as stewardship of campus roadways and infrastructure.

Casey consistently exceeds expectations by taking ownership beyond project scope to protect safety, quality, and long-term value. Whether negotiating critical upgrades during renovations or responding immediately to unexpected building issues, he demonstrates unwavering commitment to the University's best interests.

Through innovative use of digital tools, advocacy for accessibility, and dedication to mentorship, Casey ensures McMaster's facilities are safe, inclusive, and future-ready. His work directly supports student success and reinforces McMaster's reputation as a well-maintained, forward-thinking campus.

Madeline Van Impe
Assistant Director, Planning & Administration
Wilson College of Leadership & Civic Engagement

Madeline Van Impe has played a foundational role in building Wilson College from its earliest stages, providing strategic and operational leadership that supports academic programs, research, and civic engagement initiatives. Her work has been central to establishing systems, partnerships, and structures that enable Wilson College's long-term success.

Madeline consistently exceeds expectations by anticipating institutional needs and developing innovative solutions in a new academic environment. She has led the creation of internal roadmaps, cross-unit agreements, recruitment materials, and engagement initiatives that strengthen collaboration and student experience.

Known for her inclusive leadership, professionalism, and ability to bridge academic and administrative domains, Madeline has enhanced McMaster's reputation as a leader in civic learning and community engagement. Her work continues to shape a strong, values-driven institutional identity for Wilson College and the University as a whole.

Gabi Watson
Program Manager, Education
Health Research Methods, Evidence & Impact

Gabi Watson has demonstrated exceptional leadership, resilience, and care in advancing the educational mission of the Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence & Impact. Over more than a decade at McMaster, she has progressed through increasingly senior roles, consistently centring student experience and team wellbeing.

Gabi exceeded expectations by stepping into a department-wide leadership role during a period of staffing gaps and organizational change. Through cross-training, streamlined workflows, and tireless personal commitment, she ensured uninterrupted program delivery and strengthened team cohesion. Her leadership turned uncertainty into an opportunity to build a more collaborative, efficient, and supportive culture.

A strong advocate for equity and inclusion, Gabi contributes extensively to EDI-IR initiatives and student engagement. Her work has enhanced program quality, student satisfaction, and departmental morale, reinforcing McMaster's reputation for compassionate leadership and educational excellence.

PRESIDENT'S AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN 2025

TEAM NOMINEES

Accessible Course (Re)-Design Pilot Project Team

The Accessible Course (Re)Design Pilot Project Team delivered an innovative, cross-unit initiative that strengthened McMaster's approach to accessibility in teaching and learning. Bringing together expertise from Student Accessibility Services, the MacPherson Institute, and the Office of the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning, the team designed and implemented a new faculty development model that proactively supports accessible course and assessment design.

Working with 21 instructors across five faculties, the team combined individualized consultations, facilitated cohort sessions, and course-specific accommodation data to support accessibility-focused redesign across approximately 35 undergraduate and graduate courses. This was delivered over an intensive six-week period. The pilot required exceptional coordination, flexibility, and collaboration, with team members contributing well beyond their regular responsibilities.

The pilot has already delivered meaningful impact. Faculty participants reported improved understanding of accommodation processes, stronger confidence in accessible pedagogy, and more collaborative relationships with institutional support units. Externally, the initiative positions McMaster as a sector leader in integrated accessibility practice, with plans to share findings at provincial and national conferences. Through thoughtful design, inclusive practice, and exemplary service, the team has created a scalable model that advances equity, strengthens teaching practice, and enhances McMaster's reputation for leadership in accessible education.

Team Members

Kate Brown
Jen Faubert
Svjetlana Ijadic

Paige Maylott
Devon Mordell
Anup Samuel

Mei-Ju Shih
Roksana Sobota

Graduate Support Payment System Optimization Project

The Graduate Support Payment System Optimization Team delivered a major operational transformation that modernized how McMaster disburses graduate student funding. In response to significant institutional risk associated with a legacy payment system, this large, cross-functional team collaborated to redesign a process responsible for approximately 21,500 annual payments totaling nearly \$40 million.

Through detailed process mapping, system analysis, and sustained engagement across faculties and administrative units, the team implemented a streamlined, automated model that improves data integrity, reduces manual workload, and ensures timely, predictable payments for graduate students. The new system addresses longstanding challenges identified by graduate students, including inconsistent communication and lack of clarity around funding packages.

The impact has been substantial. Employees across Finance, Student Accounts, Financial Aid & Awards, Human Resources, and research offices now benefit from reduced errors, improved transparency, and more efficient workflows. For students, the changes reduce financial uncertainty at critical points in their academic careers. By delivering a complex, institution-wide solution through collaboration, innovation, and inclusive practice, the team strengthened operational excellence and reinforced McMaster's reputation for responsible stewardship and student-centred service.

Team Members

Helen Chen
Radmila Cucuz
Wendy Green
Stacey Farkas
Kim Finlay
Babu James
Michelle Jubinville
Ernie Latif

Shirley Marshall
Vishw Mewada
Amanda Morgan
Lara Ojebiyi
Nishaan Parbhoo
Sharon Patry
Sam Petryk
Loverna Robinson

Mark Rumbles
Laura Side
Darren Simpson
Paul Smith
Natalie Taylor
Aba Wadden
Jesse Wilson

Health Misinformation Project Team

The Health Misinformation Project Team delivered a landmark digital initiative that strengthened McMaster University's role as a trusted source of evidence-based health information at a critical time. Through a first-of-its-kind partnership between a Canadian university and YouTube Health, the team produced 56 bilingual video explainers designed to counter health misinformation and improve public understanding of complex and often sensitive health topics.

Working collaboratively with Faculty of Health Sciences experts and the Faculty of Humanities, Department of French, the team managed the full production cycle internally, from scripting and filming to translation, accessibility review, and digital distribution. Within six months, the series reached more than 148,000 viewers across platforms and generated over \$60,000 in revenue, demonstrating both impact and sustainability.

The initiative elevated McMaster's visibility nationally and internationally, with content featured prominently on YouTube's authoritative health information shelf. Thoughtful attention to accessibility, cultural inclusion, and audience sensitivity ensured the videos served diverse communities responsibly. Through innovation, collaboration, and disciplined execution, the Health Misinformation Project Team exemplifies outstanding service and reinforces McMaster's reputation as a leader in public health communication.

Team Members

Latasha Deleo
Gillian Earle

Brandon Kaiser
Shayla Vize

History of Vaccinology Team

For Immunization Awareness Week 2025, The History of Vaccinology Team delivered an ambitious and highly impactful communications initiative that showcased McMaster University's global leadership in vaccine research. Through a coordinated, multi-channel strategy, the team produced donor materials, original news content, an op-ed published in The Conversation, a social media campaign, and a short documentary film that served as the centrepiece of the project.

Premiered at an international vaccine research symposium, the documentary transformed more than 50 years of McMaster's scientific achievement into a compelling, accessible narrative for an audience of more than 300 international researchers, funders and policymakers. The film's quality and storytelling drew widespread praise and positioned McMaster as Canada's authority in vaccinology at a time of heightened global attention. Since launch, the campaign has continued to reach thousands of additional stakeholders through strategic online distribution, extending its impact well beyond the original event.

Remarkably, the project was conceived, produced and delivered entirely in-house, without external funding or dedicated documentary resources. Through initiative, collaboration and exceptional craftsmanship, the team created a durable institutional asset that strengthens McMaster's research profile, supports advancement and recruitment efforts, and reinforces public trust in vaccine science. Their work exemplifies outstanding service and innovative institutional storytelling that meaningfully enhances the University's reputation.

Team Members

Matt Clarke

Blake Dillon

Jennifer Stranges

Indigenous Marauder Identity Team



The Indigenous Marauder Identity Team delivered a powerful, values-driven initiative that advanced reconciliation, belonging, and Indigenous representation within McMaster's athletics community. Working in close partnership with Indigenous Student Services, the Indigenous Student-Athlete Council, and Cayuga Woodland artist Kyle Joedicke, the team developed and launched an Indigenous Marauder logo rooted in consultation, care, and cultural responsibility.

The logo debuted during a Truth & Reconciliation game day at Ron Joyce Stadium, supported by original storytelling, Indigenous-designed uniforms, community vendors, and a mini-documentary, Two Feet in Your Canoe. The initiative reached more than one million viewers on social media and received significant earned media coverage, while merchandise sales directly supported Indigenous student initiatives.

What distinguished this work was the team's commitment to following best practices and approaches. Extensive consultation, external learning, and the establishment of long-term stewardship ensured the project was accountable and community-driven. The result is a lasting identity that affirms Indigenous presence at McMaster and strengthens the University's reputation for authentic, relationship-based reconciliation.

Team Members

Mack Abbott
Jay Barlett
Eric Bourque
Tanisha Bryan
Seth Cabezas

Chrissy Doolittle
Keenan Jeppesen
T.J. Kelly
Luken Lawson
Maddy Lutes

Matthew Pohlmann
Brittany Reifenstein
Brittany Rumney
Natasha Symons

Internal Medicine Residency Program Administration Team

The Internal Medicine Residency Program Administration Team provides exceptional support to one of McMaster's largest and most demanding postgraduate medical education programs. Supporting 115 residents across multiple hospital sites, the team plays a central role in ensuring the smooth delivery of a three-year training program that underpins patient care across Hamilton and beyond. Their expertise and dedication were particularly evident during the recent Royal College accreditation process, which concluded successfully in November, reflecting their sustained commitment to quality improvement and program excellence.

Renowned for their responsiveness and personalized approach, the team consistently goes above and beyond to support residents through high-stakes exams, complex scheduling, admissions interviews and unexpected personal or professional challenges. Their willingness to work evenings and weekends, combined with a calm, compassionate presence, creates a supportive environment where residents feel understood and cared for. During the pandemic, the team adapted quickly, ensuring academic programming, examinations and interviews continued with minimal disruption.

The team's inclusive, resident-centred approach supports learners from diverse cultural, educational and geographic backgrounds, including international and internationally trained physicians. Their work has lasting impact, reflected in strong alumni relationships and a national reputation for outstanding administrative support. Through professionalism, empathy and deep institutional knowledge, the Internal Medicine Residency Program Administration Team exemplifies outstanding service and contributes significantly to McMaster's reputation as a leader in medical education.

Team Members

Sarah Algar
Sharlene Honaizer

Christine Knight
Susan Serro

Operational Excellence Forum Organizing Team

The Operational Excellence Forum Organizing Team designed and delivered McMaster's first-ever Operational Excellence Forum, creating a university-wide platform to share improvement work, foster collaboration, and strengthen responsible stewardship. The inaugural forum attracted nearly 550 registrants and showcased 23 projects through workshops, panels, and interactive sessions.

Working entirely on a voluntary basis, team members from across academic and administrative units built the forum from the ground up, developing governance structures, proposal processes, communications, and event logistics. Despite a limited budget, the team delivered a high-quality experience through creative problem-solving and shared resource use.

The forum's success has had lasting impact. Strong evaluation results, high demand for subsequent forums, and the creation of centralized dashboards and shared resources have embedded operational excellence into day-to-day practice. Interest from peer institutions and invitations to present nationally further reinforce McMaster's reputation as a collaborative, innovative leader in operational improvement.

Team Members

Fatima Ansar
Amanda Baldwin
Liana Bontempo
Chantelle Campbell
Fernando Carneiro
Alex Coldwell
Andrea Foster

Holly Gibson
Laura Grisé
Christian Gundlack
Gregory Iarusso
Tamara Martin
Charlotte Miller
Paola Morrone

Allison Mullin
Britt Reifenstein
Sidrah Siddiqui
Drew Singer
Kristen Watts

Science IT

The Science IT Team delivered a strategic, multi-year transformation of operational data management within the Faculty of Science. Through a stakeholder-informed SharePoint migration initiative, the team consolidated storage systems into a secure, accessible, and collaborative digital environment, with 22-unit migrations underway.

Balancing daily IT operations with large-scale project delivery, the team designed a cohort-based deployment model supported by plain-language training, bookable support, and extensive documentation. Their work improved data security, reduced administrative burden, and strengthened digital literacy across the Faculty.

The initiative has positioned Science IT as a campus leader in digital accessibility, governance, and innovation. By sharing templates, resources, and expertise with other units, the team has extended its impact beyond science. Their work strengthens McMaster's operational resilience, supports compliance, and enhances the University's reputation for thoughtful, scalable IT leadership.

Team Members

Elaine Barrett
Jessica Blackwood

Miroslav Cika
Jamie Kaushal

Dave Thompson